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BOOK REVIEWS.

Governors' Letter-Books, 1840-1853, edited by Evarts Boutell Greene and Charles Manfred Thompson, published by the trustees of the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois, 1911.

This is volume two of the Executive Series and volume seven of the Illinois Historical Collections. It maintains the high standard of mechanical and typographical excellence of the preceding volumes. It is illustrated with the photogravure portraits of Governors Thomas Carlin, Thomas Ford, Augustus C. French, and Joel A. Matteson. It is furnished with a good working bibliography of the period and an excellent analytical index.

The volume contains the letters, with omissions noted in the preface, of Governors Carlin, Ford, French, and Matteson, together with invaluable critical and explanatory notes. In the short general introduction, pages XV to XXVII, Mr. Greene has sketched with a few master strokes, the chief characteristics of the period. There is one altogether welcome surprise in this volume. It is Mr. Thompson's, "Study of the Administration of Governor Thomas Ford," pages XXIX to CXVIII. This is one of the most interesting administrations in our early history—a period of despondency following the period of extravagant optimism which had committed the State to a chimerical scheme of internal improvements and banking, and had plunged the State deeply into debt. Governor Ford combatted the spirit of repudiation, insisted on a policy of business integrity in dealing with the State's creditors, adjusted the State's accounts and commenced the regular payment of interest on its debt, and aided in the solution of many other problems confronting the State government. Mr. Thompson's study reveals a wide familiarity with the sources of information of the period, and a keen critical insight and wholesome sanity of

judgment in his treatment of these sources. His presentation is clear, compact and vigorous. He is neither a partisan, an apologist, nor a hero worshipper. In short, his is by far the best treatment of this complex and interesting period extant.

The volume as a whole is extremely valuable, not only for the study of Illinois history, but also for the history of the entire Mississippi valley. It deals with experiences of Illinois which were repeated with variations by many of the other states of this section—the period of youthful, rampant democracy so characteristic of American frontier life—the period when, having completed at least a tentative form of government, the people plunge enthusiastically into the solution of the complicated problems of industrial development and regulation with precious little knowledge or experience to guide them, and achieve two unexpected results—experience and a heavy burden of debt.

S. E. THOMAS.

Charles 1.

Alvord and Bidgood's, "First Explorations of the Trans-Alleghany Region by the Virginians."

The following review of this interesting work is copied from the Virginia Magazine of History and Biography.

The First Exploration of the Trans-Alleghany Region by the Virginians, 1650-1674. By Clarence Walworth Alvord and Lee Bidgood.

The Arthur H. Clark Company, Cleveland, 1912, pp. 275, with six maps and fac-similes, and index.

Professor Alvord states, correctly, in his preface to this very valuable and interesting book, "it is remarkable that a new chapter in the history of the exploration of North America has remained so long unwritten; yet the story of the discovery of the Trans-Alleghany region, by the Virginians is here first told in its entirety." A most striking story it is. As it was to remain so long untold, it is most fortunate that the publication which has come at last is under such learned and careful supervision as Professors Alvord and Bidgood have given it.

The book begins with two strikingly contrasted pictures. One, in June, 1671, at Sault Ste. Marie, of Frenchmen, with considerable state and ceremony, taking possession of the country for the king of France, and the other, a few months later, of a few travel-stained